

- SECTION 2 MAKING GOVERNMENT MORE
EFFICIENT**
- 2.1 Establishing an efficiency programme
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commercialisation
 - 2.3 Strengthening anti-corruption measures

2.1 Establishing an efficiency programme

The context for change

The Public Service Review Commission reporting in 1989 noted that the public service was:

- too large, cumbersome and heavily centralised;
- managed by relatively inexperienced staff;
- characterised by overlap and depletion of functions;
- lacking in transparency;
- inaccessible;
- subject to complicated rules and procedures;
- prone to delay.

Against this background, the Public Service Commission established an Efficiency Unit in 1994 with responsibility to:

- develop effective rationalisation programmes and related management issues;
- monitor the implementation of Commission directives;
- analyse the potential and practicability of sub-contracting and commercialisation;
- troubleshoot.

Implementing change

Under the co-ordination of the Efficiency Unit, each ministry is required to scrutinise and surrender posts that are not necessary. Coupled with the introduction of performance management, ministries are expected to improve the quality of service, through increasing managerial competence and organisational effectiveness.

The co-operation of the Heads of Ministries, which is essential in efficiency improvement, has been forthcoming to assist the Efficiency Unit in its difficult task.

The Government of Zimbabwe's objective is to use the Efficiency Unit to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the Zimbabwe Public Service. The Efficiency Unit is working in collaboration with the Human Resources Directorate to introduce a cost and performance management system, by realigning management relationships to support this system and by developing human resources.

The Efficiency Unit has been particularly instrumental in increasing ministerial autonomy and commercialising government operations.

Supporting material

- (i) Public Service Review Commission May 1989
- (ii) Terms of Reference for Consultancy and Advisory Services for Government-Executed UNDP/MDP Project ZIM/90/OO8;508

2.2 Improving productivity through commercialisation

The context for change

When the Government commenced a programme of public enterprise reform in 1991, there had been a general recognition that some public enterprises were not performing well. The number of state-owned enterprises had risen from around 20 to 41 since independence in 1980. The quality of services provided by many of these public enterprises was less than satisfactory.

Overall public spending remained high because the Government was subsidising poorly performing public enterprises. Public Enterprise Reform meant that these enterprises would face competition and charge market prices for their services. This would be achieved through the commercialisation of the enterprises.

Contracting out of activities presently carried out by government departments was encouraged under a Value for Money programme first introduced in 1987 and detailed in plans drafted with the assistance of ODA in 1995. It is expected that 16,000 jobs will be moved out of government as this contracting-out programme is implemented between 1996 and 1998. The Ministry of Defence sub-contracted some of its support services to a private company with effect from 1 July, 1996. The Ministry of Defence thereby abolished 1,660 civilian posts on 30 June, 1996. Another five ministries will follow suit around September, 1996.

Implementing change

Public Enterprises are now required to develop strategic plans and examine their prospects for survival. However, to date, market-testing has been introduced only in a few areas, like transportation.

Other developments have been taking place in restructuring some government departments. Feasibility studies of a number of state departments have been undertaken in order to determine which ones would be more productive if they were commercialised.

In the Ministry of Education, plans are at an advanced stage to commercialise the Examinations Branch. The Central Mechanical Equipment Department, which is responsible for the procurement and management of government-owned vehicles is also being considered for commercialisation.

In the Ministry of Transport and Energy, a feasibility study is being undertaken to explore the possibility of commercialising the maintenance of state roads. The Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing responsible for government construction has increased the number of jobs it contracts out to private companies.

A programme to commercialise or privatise a number of public enterprises is being implemented. Government has already commercialised the Grain Marketing Board, the Cotton Marketing Board, the Cold Storage Commission and the Dairy Marketing Board. In order to accelerate the process, Government took over the debts of these enterprises to enable them to start with a clean slate. Contracts for the takeover of these debts have been signed, with Government granting autonomy and requiring accountability in decision-making. Government now expects these public enterprises to operate efficiently and profitably without recourse to the fiscus. Government will shortly consider recommendations on the commercialisation and privatisation of Air Zimbabwe Corporation, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority, the National Railways of Zimbabwe, the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe and Affretair.

Supporting material

- (i) Zimbabwe: A Framework for Economic Reform (1991-1995)
- (ii) Presidential Speech: Opening of Parliament, 2nd July 1996
- (iii) Budget Statement, 25th July 1996

2.3 Strengthening anti-corruption measures

Corruption is a criminal offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1985 which strengthened previous legislation. Concepts that were introduced by this Act include *failure* and *omission*.

According to the Act, if a public official shows favour to a customer during the course of his duties he has committed an offence. However, corrupt behaviour can also be inferred if a public official *fails* to perform certain duties. For example, if a customs' official does not apply customs' regulations where he should have, he is deemed to have committed an offence of *omission*.

The law extends to cover appointments to the public service. Anyone in a position of authority who gives an advantage to a candidate with inferior qualifications, if he or she is acquainted with the candidate, has to prove that they have not violated the provisions of the Act.

In passing this law, Parliament was reacting to the criticism of public officials in the early 1980s. A few high profile cases in 1983 and 1984 attracted publicity and the amounts involved shocked many.

It was recognised that the tightening of the law was not enough. A strengthened code of conduct requires, amongst other stipulations full declaration of gifts by public servants. The code of conduct regulations are fairly broad and the type of offences covered are as follows:

- failing to take reasonable care of state funds or property;
- theft of funds and property;
- failing to reimburse advances;
- falsifying official documents;
- accepting bribes;
- failing to declare and disclose conflict of interest.

The purpose of having tight anti-corruption measures is to protect the reputation of public servants. Such measures also help in protecting the vulnerable members of the public from the public servants who abuse their power.

Implementing change

In Zimbabwe, for the past two years, there have been workshops to discuss strategies for preventing corrupt behaviour among public servants. These workshops were held in each of the eight provinces and officials in key government departments participated.

Supporting material

- (i) Audit and Exchequer Act (Chapter 168)
- (ii) Prevention of Corruption Act 1985
- (iii) Report on the conference on The Prevention of Fraud, Corruption and the Irregularities in the Civil Service, Harare 8 to 10 June 1992